



COMDTINST 16672.3A

10 MAY 1989

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16672.3A

Subj: International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (72 COLREGS); Lights for Unmanned Barges

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Instruction is to permit battery powered navigation lights to be used on unmanned barges.
2. DIRECTIVES EFFECTED. COMDTINST 16672.3 is cancelled.
3. DISCUSSION.
 - a. Many unmanned barges do not routinely operate machinery to generate electricity when they are underway. As a result they must use battery powered navigation lights.
 - b. The Coast Guard has determined that at the present time there are no available battery powered navigation lights which can reasonably meet the vertical sector requirements contained in Section 10 of Annex T to the 72 COLREGS.
 - c. Rule 24(h) of the 72 COLREGS states that "Where from any sufficient cause it is impracticable for a vessel or object being towed to exhibit the lights or shapes prescribed in paragraph (e) or (g) of this Rule, all possible measures shall be taken to light the vessel or object towed or at least to indicate the presence of such vessel or object." The lack of any practical battery powered lights capable of meeting the vertical sector requirements of the 72 COLREGS is, in the opinion of the Coast Guard, "sufficient cause" as the term is used in Rule 24(h).

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3. d. The Rules of the Road Advisory Council (RORAC) and the Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) have recommended that unmanned barges be allowed to deviate from, while meeting as closely as practicable, the vertical sector light requirements but that the required horizontal intensity shall be maintained. The Coast Guard is also discussing the unmanned barge vertical sector light requirements with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to get a consensus on Rule 24(h) as it applies to unmanned barges.
4. PROCEDURES.
 - a. Manufacturers seeking Coast Guard approval for battery powered lights that are to be used on unmanned barges that either (1) do not have electricity generating machinery on board, or (2) have such equipment on board that is not routinely operated when the barge is underway, should submit the required data to Commandant (G-MTH-2). These lights need not be tested for the vertical sector requirements of the 72 COLREGS. Minimum required intensity must be maintained in the horizontal plane. Unmanned and manned barges equipped with electricity generating machinery that is routinely operated when underway must meet the vertical and horizontal sector requirements of the 72 COLREGS.
 - b. Unmanned barges that either do not have electricity generating machinery on board, or have such machinery that is not routinely operated when the barge is underway, may use battery powered lights accepted by Commandant (G-MTH-2) to comply with Rule 24 of the 72 COLREGS. All other requirements of the 72 COLREGS must be met before the light will be accepted.
5. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, unit commanding officers - and Commander, CG Activities Europe shall ensure proper dissemination of this material to responsible personnel.

/s/ R. T. NELSON
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and Waterway Services